

Kicking A Goal

By LITTLE MCCLURG.

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Though it was only an hour before the great football game between Clinton and Darnall, their conversation was not of the gridiron as they walked down Main street bound for Clinton oval.

"There's only one thing that keeps me from becoming engaged to you right now, Thornton," said the girl after a serious pause.

"You'll have to tell me, Letta; I can't guess it," answered the stalwart quarterback of the Clinton eleven.

"Just this," she said. "I am not altogether sure that you really need me in your life. You are a strong, self-reliant boy, capable of fighting your way over the obstacles that will come to you."

"For a moment the young man did not reply. Then he looked at his companion, his gaze sincere.

"Letta, you're right," he agreed quietly. "That's the way I want you to feel about it. Deep down in my heart I know that you would always inspire me to strive for the best in life. But I must convince you of this, and I'll do it, too, dear girl, if I get the chance!"

"Maybe you will, Thornton," she replied, "and I hope that you will more than you can guess. Why—why not begin at the game today?"

"That's what I intend to do, Letta!" was his prompt response. "I expect to play as I never played before, just because you are wearing Clinton's colors and wearing my pennant. It's a pretty one, isn't it?"

"The gold and brown stripes harmonize beautifully with that bright brown gown you are wearing. Your ticket calls for a seat back on the north goal, and I know I'll see you clearly despite the crowds."

"It certainly is fine," she declared, "that little me may be an inspiration to a Clinton boy to play at his best! But it seems almost a pity that you are not one of the halfbacks or in the line, though I know everything depends on the quarterback. He gives the signals and delivers the ball, doesn't he?"

"I know what you mean, Letta," he said. "You would like to see me in a position where I could run with the ball and hand it out to somebody else?"

The girl nodded.

"Well, that's because I weigh only 145 instead of 200 pounds," he continued. "After all, it takes sheer weight in the line, and that naturally slides me into the quarterback's place."

"But you mustn't forget that Clinton depends upon me to kick the goals, and a goal kicked or missed often wins or loses a big game like this."

They were now on the college grounds amid shouting hundreds and fluttering flags and pennants. Thornton assisted Letta to her seat high up in that part of the semicircular grand stand that stretched around behind the north goal.

"I hope Clinton gets the south end of the field," he said as he started off toward the clubhouse.

"Why?" she asked.

"Because then I'll be able to see the orange and brown magnet (that's drawing me north toward Darnall's goal)" he said earnestly.

Soon the rival elevens trotted out on the field, and from the thousand tongued grand stand rose a mighty shout, while pennants, ribbons, handkerchiefs and flags mingled in a waving, varicolored mass.

It was the great wind-up game of the year, and there was a chance for any player to win a glory crown by making the deciding touchdown. Both elevens, it was evident, were steeled for the contest.

But, as fate would have it, Clinton got the north end of the field, and a savage quarterback waited for the umpire's signal with his back to the girl in orange who was waving a pennant for him.

But despite this disappointment he gathered his strength for the charge, and as the shrill whistle struck his ears he leaped forward straight for the ball that lay on the line twenty yards in front of him. Biff! The oval went whirling through the air in a sixty yard parabola, with the whole Clinton team in pursuit.

The ball landed in the arms of Darnall's fullback, and the big fellow came back up the field in a series of lunges. But before a dozen yells had split the air he was down, with every Clinton man piling over him.

Then the shoulder to shoulder battle began. In three downs Darnall lost the ball. Then Thornton's opportunity came. To test Darnall's line he gave at the risk of having his own neck twisted a series of center rush signals.

Three times the heavy backs charged over him, and he felt his breath going fast as Darnall hurled back the plungers. End runs were tried with but little better success. Seeing that line rushes were hopeless, he gave the signal for a kick, and Clinton's fullback sent the ball far down the field.

But Darnall hurried it back with another kick. There were more close formation plays, followed by two more long distance kicks, while the air was filled with the cries of the spectators and the sharp, quick shriek of the umpire's whistle.

The time of the first half was up.

up when suddenly out of a scrimmage rolled the ball. For a second nobody excepting Clinton's quarterback knew what had become of it.

As it bounded carelessly along Thornton at one swoop seized it. Simultaneously he heard a shout on the side line, "Only forty seconds left!"

Directly in front of him, not twenty yards distant, was Darnall's goal. Even a halfway drop kick might win the game. Thornton dropped the ball to the ground and swung his right foot. A great cheer went up, which died away suddenly in a groan. The ball flew high, but it didn't go within fifty feet of either post.

"Time's up!" yelled the umpire. Thornton felt that all Clinton was disappointed beyond expression and deeply ashamed of the showing he had made after the college had boasted of his prowess as a drop kicker.

He remained in dejected seclusion during the intermission.

But when the whistle sounded again he was like another man. Clinton had the south goal this time, and clearly the quarterback saw a girl in orange swinging a pennant in the grand stand. Already the throngs had forgotten his fumble in the hope of victory in the second half.

At the kick-off Thornton sent the pigskin seventy yards down the field and then plunged into the game with ferocious energy. He determined to redeem himself or perish in the attempt.

Back and forth over the field surged the teams, while thousands shouted encouragement.

Neither eleven seemed able to break down the defense of the other until toward the end of the half, when Clinton began to come up the field steadily.

Thornton, his head clear as a bell, was playing at frightful pace, giving Darnall no time to catch its breath after each attack. But thirty yards from the goal line! Darnall braced himself heroically and stood like a stone wall.

"Only one more minute to play!" called the umpire, and the crowds took up the shout.

Thornton realized that in so short a time line plunges would be futile. There was only one hope of victory, another drop kick for a goal. While only twenty yards away, the goal posts were off to the left at an oblique angle.

There was about one chance in a dozen of putting the ball between them, but Thornton took it. He stood back of the line ready to call the signal, and the Darnall eleven, seeing it was to be a kick, got ready to plunge through and break up the play.

Then suddenly the quarterback, looking directly between the goal posts, saw Letta in the grand stand in an attitude of breathless expectancy, and he knew more than the game depended upon his quickness and skill.

He stepped back a few yards, and with his eye riveted on the figure in orange he gave the signal in clear, sharp tones, "Three, double two, eleven!"

The ball struck his outstretched hands, and as he dropped it he shot out his right foot. The next second a big Darnall guard leaped over the line and struck Thornton head-on, sending him reeling senseless twenty feet from the spot where he was hit.

But the big man was half a second too late, for Thornton's toe had caught the ball squarely, and it went flying straight as a bullet between the goal posts and up into the grand stand, falling almost at Letta's feet!

A wild, deafening yell of joy broke over the field, but the quarterback did not hear it. Ten minutes later, when he came to, a girl was bathing his forehead, and he caught the glow of her bright brown dress. The crowd fell back respectfully.

"Don't worry, Thornton, dear boy," she whispered. "I saw you looking at me when you made that wonderful kick, and I know now how much I mean to you!"

Some Odd Animals.

Many curious animals haunt the marshy parts of South America north of the pampas. Frogs, big and ferocious (the ceratophrys), given to making vicious springs when closely approached; the capybara, a cavy "contented with the bulk of a sheep"; the huge coypu rat and the swarthy, pig-like tapir are frequently seen.

Along the forest margins troops of peccaries are often met with, occasionally the jaguar, sometimes the puma, likewise that toothless curiosity, the great ant bear, long in claw, long nosed and remarkably long tongued. Very plentiful, too, are those "little knights in scaly armor," the quaint, waddling armadillos. Long toed juncos pace about upon the floating leaves.

A familiar object is the great jabiru, a stork with a preference for the desolate lagoons, where it may often be observed statuesque on one leg and wrapped in prospection.—Edinburgh Scotsman.

Strenuous Methods of Healing.

Papuan medicine men are regarded with great respect by the natives. Those I have met certainly seemed energetic and hardworking. They sit close to the patient, massaging the seat of pain with much vigor, and, while they are thus rubbing, make a noise with their lips rather like that which a groom makes when rubbing down a horse. The process is a tiring one, and the medicine man stops at intervals to drink hot water in which taro has been boiled. His object is to extract some mysterious foreign substance from the sick man's body, and if he succeeds in this he receives a few otherwise he gets nothing. "No cure, no pay" is apparently the Papuan sufferer's motto.—Wide World Magazine.

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